Amendments to the Claims

Please cancel Claims 1 - 34. Please add new Claims 35 - 68. The Claim Listing below will replace all prior versions of the claims in the application:

Claim Listing

1-34. Cancelled.

35. (New) An aldonic acid ester of polysaccharides or polysaccharide derivatives which are selectively oxidized at the reducing end of the chain to aldonic acids.

36. (New) The aldonic acid ester as claimed in Claim 35, wherein the polysaccharides or polysaccharide derivatives are starch fractions or starch fraction derivatives.

37. (New) The aldonic acid ester as claimed in Claim 36, wherein the starch fractions are amylopectin degradation fractions.

38. (New) The aldonic acid ester as claimed in Claim 37, wherein the amylopectin degradation fractions are obtained by acid degradation and/or degradation by α-amylase of waxy corn starch.

39. (New) The aldonic acid ester as claimed in Claim 38, wherein the starch fractions have an average molecular weight MW of 2000-50 000 Dalton and an average branching of 5-10 mol% α-1,6-glycosidic linkages.

40. (New) The aldonic acid ester as claimed in Claim 38, wherein the starch fractions have an average molecular weight MW of 2000- 50 000 Dalton and an average branching in the range of greater than 10 to 25 mol % α-1,6-glycosidic linkages.

41. (New) The aldonic acid ester as claimed in Claim 36, wherein the starch fraction derivatives are hydroxyethyl derivatives of waxy corn starch degradation fractions.

42. (New) The aldonic ester as claimed in Claim 41, wherein the average molecular weight MW of the hydroxyethyl starch fractions is in the range of 2-300 000 Dalton, and the substitution level MS is between 0.1 and 0.8, and the C2/C6 ratio of the substituents on carbon atoms C2 and C6 of the anhydroglucoses is between 2 and 15.

43. (New) The aldonic acid ester as claimed in Claim 35 wherein the alcohol from which the alcohol component of the aldonic acid ester is derived has a molecular weight in the range from 80 to 500 g/mol.

44. (New) The aldonic acid ester as claimed in Claim 35, wherein the alcohol from which the alcohol component of the aldonic acid ester is derived has a pKa in the range from 6 to 12.

45. (New) The aldonic ester as claimed in Claim 35, wherein the alcohol from which the alcohol component of the aldonic acid ester is derived, of the aldonic acid ester, includes an HO-N group or a phenol group.

46. (New) The aldonic acid ester as claimed in Claim 35, wherein the alcohol from which the alcohol component of the aldonic acid ester is derived is selected from N-hydroxysuccinimide, sulfo-N-hydroxysuccinimide, substituted phenols and hydroxybenzotriazole.

47. (New) The aldonic acid ester as claimed in Claim 46, wherein the alcohol from which the alcohol component of the aldonic acid ester is derived is N-hydroxysuccinimide and sulfo-N-hydroxysuccinimide.

48. (New) A solid comprising at least one aldonic acid ester as claimed in Claim 35.

49. (New) A solution comprising at least one aldonic acid ester as claimed in Claim 35.

50. (New) The solution as claimed in Claim 49, wherein the solution comprises at least one organic solvent.

51. (New) The solution as claimed in Claim 50, wherein the solution comprises not more than 0.5% by weight water.

52. (New) The solution as claimed in Claim 49, wherein the solution comprises at least one aprotic solvent.

53. (New) The solution as claimed in Claim 52, wherein the solvent is dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO), N-methylpyrrolidone, dimethylacetamide (DMA) and/or or dimethylformamide (DMF).

54. (New) A method for preparing aldonic acid ester as claimed in Claim 35, wherein at least one aldonic acid and/or one aldonic acid derivative is reacted with at least one alcohol component in aprotic solvent.

55. (New) The method as claimed in Claim 54, wherein the alcohol component is employed in 5 to 50-fold molar excess based on that aldonic acid and/or the aldonic acid derivative.

56. (New) The method as claimed in Claim 54, wherein the reaction takes place with the use of at least one activating reagent.

57. (New) The method as claimed in Claim 56, wherein the activating reagent comprises at least one carbodiimide.

58. (New) The method as claimed in Claim 56, wherein the activating reagent is employed in 1- to 3-molar excess based on the aldonic acid and/or the aldonic acid derivative.

59. (New) The method as claimed in Claim 54, wherein a compound which liberates an alcohol component for reaction with the aldonic acid or the aldonic acid derivative is employed.

60. (New) The method as claimed in Claim 59, wherein a carbonic diester is employed.

61. (New) The method as claimed in Claim 54, wherein the reaction takes place at a temperature in the range from 0 to 40°C.

62. (New) The method as claimed in Claim 54, wherein the reaction takes place at a low base activity.

63. (New) A method for preparing pharmaceutical active ingredients coupled to polysaccharides or polysaccharide derivatives on free amino functions, wherein at least one aldonic acid ester as claimed in Claim 35 is reacted with a pharmaceutical active ingredient which has at least one amino group.

64. (New) The method as claimed in Claim 63, wherein the reaction takes placed in aqueous medium.

65. (New) The method as claimed in Claim 64, wherein the pH of the aqueous medium is in the range from 7 to 9.

66. (New) The method as claimed in Claim 63, wherein the reaction takes place at a temperature in the range from 0°C to 40°C.

67. (New) The method as claimed in Claim 63, wherein the pharmaceutical active ingredient is a polypeptide or a protein.

68. (New) A pharmaceutical active ingredient which is coupled to polysaccharides or polysaccharide derivatives and is obtained by the method as claimed in Claim 63, wherein the pharmaceutical active ingredient is denatured in anhydrous medium and enters into unwanted side reactions with carbodiimides, such as inter- and intramolecular crosslinking or reaction with phosphate groups of the pharmaceutical active ingredient.